

California Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee (BDPAC)
Water Supply Subcommittee June 14, 2006 Meeting Summary
Bonderson Building Hearing Room
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Introductions

The following Water Supply Subcommittee members and alternates attended the meeting: Steve Hall, Bernice Sullivan, and Richard Denton

The meeting focused on the following agenda items:

1. Program Plans -- Conveyance, Environmental Water Account, and Surface Storage
2. SDIP and the Delta's Uncertain Future
3. Using Common Assumptions to Further Surface Storage Decisions

1. Program Plans:

Conveyance -- Presenter: Kathy Kelly (DWR)

The presentation covered the components of the program (including the study of the effects on fish of 10,300 cfs pumping as part of the SDIP), the progress on each component, and the program's three priorities for the next year (finalizing the SDIP EIS/EIR and beginning construction of the operable gates; completing the Collection, Handling, Transport, and Release study; and approving and continuing a through-Delta conveyance study). Staff hopes to finish the study of 8,500 cfs pumping by the time that the operable gates are constructed. Finally, Kelly made available a handout with the program's budget for the next fiscal year, including a breakdown for all program components.

Comments:

Co-chair Hall asked how CALFED and the administration are incorporating through-Delta conveyance into broader planning in the Delta; he thinks it ambitious to weave all components together and render decisions in a timely way that value all interests. Jonas Minton suggested looking at program components for how they may inform an update to the CALFED ROD. Denton stated that there is much still unknown about the Delta as a system.

Environmental Water Account -- Presenter: Teresa Geimer (DWR)

The presentation covered program accomplishments to date, primary tasks and issues, and the program's schedule (including the schedule for completing environmental documentation). The presentation finally covered the program's budget; Geimer stated that because of the current program budget it is fortunate that this is a wet year

Comments:

Minton and Geimer clarified how the long-term Environmental Water Account (EWA) EIS/EIR relates to the pelagic organism decline (POD); Minton commented that parallel program processes may cause discontinuities. Co-chair Hall questioned if EWA is doing what it intended to do to help fish; he questioned what is being done in the field to determine if it, in fact, is. Jason Philips stated that the program needs to figure out the scope of what a long-term EWA should be.

Surface Storage -- Presenter: Steve Roberts (DWR)

The presentation covered program accomplishments for each project. Roberts stated that the program is most hindered in finding local water agencies to participate as partners in individual surface storage projects. The presentation finally covered the next steps and schedule for each project.

Comments:

Minton asked what has changed in North-of-Delta Offstream Storage (NODOS) to find local partners since the project and its benefits have not changed; Roberts answered that there is some increasing support (including for financing and use of existing infrastructure) from local agencies. Co-chair Hall stated that as individual projects' benefits are better explained DWR will find greater support from local agencies.

2. SDIP and the Delta's Uncertain Future -- Presenter: Kathy Kelly (DWR)

The presentation generally covered the uncertainties in the Delta (such as subsidence and earthquakes) and the components of the SDIP. Kelly reported that the operable gates will be in place by June of 2009 (which is the deadline on the State Water Resources Control Board's cease and desist order).

Comments:

Minton stated that the question to be asked is if this is a no-regret action. Kelly next stated that it is difficult to address the public comments on the SDIP's environmental documents because it is hard to get at the science behind these comments; she stated that the science, in fact, remains uncertain. Co-chair Hall stated that the operable gates will impact water quality because they will allow better control over flows. Minton next commented that some fisheries agencies have concerns about the Head of Old River Barrier's effects on delta smelt. Co-chair Hall stated that DWR should consider how the operable gates will be a part of a long-term solution; Kelly responded that DWR is considering a 30-year timeframe (which is also the working life of the gates). Comments next focused on sea level rise: there is no contingency for sea level rise in the design of the operable gates. Finally, discussion focused on the effects of San Joaquin River restoration on the operable gates: changes in water levels have not been considered on the operable gates for tidal effects; the real effects that concern DWR are effects on water quality.

3. Using Common Assumptions to Further Surface Storage Decisions -- Presenters: Sean Sou (DWR) and Ron Ganzfried (Reclamation)

The presentation began by covering Common Assumption's objectives to support the surface storage program, including 1) assisting in strategic planning and both policy and management needs as well as 2) establishing common assumptions and inputs. It next covered Common Assumption's work teams and coordination with other DWR programs. The presentation then discussed the most recent developments in the model, including CALSIM II enhancements. These developments will be used in individual storage project investigations (for feasibility and environmental documents); the specific phase of the investigation drives which version is used. Still to be developed are cost allocation scenarios and conceptual financing plans; these will be part of how Common Assumptions will be used to inform decision makers.

Comments:

Andy Moran commented that using a specific version of the model based on the specific phase in the planning process takes the “common” out of Common Assumptions; Sou answered that all model results will have a sensitivity analysis but by the end of all storage program planning all projects will have used the same versions. Comments next focused on incorporating sea level rise into the model: this will be incorporated within the next year. Minton next stated his concern that there are disconnects between Common Assumptions and the State Water Plan; Mark Cowin answered that Common Assumptions uses more specific local water agency demands.

Public Comment

Co-chair Hall and the audience noted that the subcommittee is not affected by changes in the legislature's budget for the California Bay-Delta Authority and its advisory committee and subcommittees.